

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SAJ-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 AGR-10 SCA-01 /113 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

UNCLAS STATE 009795

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, CZ, US

SUBJECT: CLAIMS AGREEMENT

1. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE WASHINGTON POST OF JANUARY 15 ENTITLED "PRAGUE PRODS U.S. ON CLAIMS":

"CZECHOSLOVAKIA MAY BLOCK THE LONG-PLANNED OPENING OF A U.S. CONSULATE IN BRATISLAVA AS A SIGN OF ITS DISPLEASURE AT RESTRICTIONS ATTACHED TO THE TRADE REFORM ACT BY CONGRESS LAST MONTH, A DIPLOMATIC SOURCE SAID YESTERDAY.

U.S. OFFICIALS SAID THEY HAD NO INDICATION OF SUCH A MOVE, BUT THEY NOTED THAT PRAGUE HAS NOT YET ANSWERED A U.S. REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO OPEN THE CONSULATE THIS SPRING.

WHILE THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT HAS MADE NO OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, OFFICIALS AT ITS EMBASSY HERE AND AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT CHARACTERIZED A UNCLASSIFIED

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RECENT COMMENTARY IN RUDE PRAVO, THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST

PARTY NEWSPAPER, AS THE PREVAILING VIEWPOINT IN PRAGUE.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA NOW FEELS, ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATIC SOURCES, THAT WITHHOLDING APPROVAL FOR THE OPENING OF THE CONSULATE IN BRATISLAVA AND POSTPONEMENT OF TALKS ON CULTURAL

EXCHANGES MAY BE NECESSARY TO WIN CONCESSIONS FROM THE UNITED STATES ON THE CLAIMS ISSUE.

STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS MUCH MORE ANXIOUS TO OPEN A FACILITY IN BRATISLAVA THAN PRAGUE IS TO OPEN ONE IN CHICAGO. RECONSTRUCTION OF A U.S.-OWNED BUILDING IN BRATISLAVA FOR USE AS A CONSULATE IS NEARLY COMPLETED, BUT THE CZECHOSLOVAKS HAVE NOT YET SOUGHT A SITE IN CHICAGO.

STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES SAID THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVE BY EITHER SIDE TO REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT. "WE HAVE TO FIND OUT FIRST JUST WHAT CONGRESS WILL ACCEPT," ONE SAID.

U.S. OFFICIALS PRIVATELY DESCRIBE THE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS REACTION AS "MILDER THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED" AND NOTE THAT IT DIRECTS ITS CRITICISM AT SPECIFIC SENATORS RATHER THAN AT THE ADMINISTRATION.

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2. FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE BEING POUCHED.
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